



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Division of Information Northwest Regional Office
PORTLAND, OREGON

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

October 24, 1960

For Immediate Release

TRUMPETER SWANS HOLD OWN OR INCREASE ON COMEBACK TRAIL

Trumpeter swans, America's largest waterfowl which not long ago was feared facing extinction and now is on the comeback trail, held their numerical strength in the Rocky Mountain range and made increases in Nevada in the last year, Leo Laythe, regional director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of the Interior, said today.

The bureau recently made an aerial census of the majestic birds and counted 576 of them at their centers of abundance in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. The count admittedly is incomplete in view of the fact that drouth conditions caused some dispersals of swans to areas outside the regular census route.

There were fewer than 100 trumpeter swans in the United States, outside of Alaska, in the early 1930s when it was feared the species would go the way of the passenger pigeon and other extinct birds. The Fish and Wildlife Service in 1935 established the Red Rock Lakes Migratory Waterfowl refuge in Montana with the goal being to place these birds in a more secure position and preserve the species for future generations. This was to provide protection and habitat in addition to that found in national parks, which helped immeasurably in bringing the population up to the present level in the Montana-Wyoming and Idaho area.

Where only a few birds existed a few years ago, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife this year counted 344 trumpeter swans in Montana, 118 in Idaho and 114 in Wyoming. The count showed 197 trumpeters on the Red Rock refuge and 147 in the Gallatin and Beaverhead national forests and the Centennial valley in Montana; 76 birds in the Targhee National forest and 42 in Island park and elsewhere in Idaho; and 63 trumpeter swans in Yellowstone National park, 42 in Grand Teton National park and nine in Teton National forest and National Elk refuge in Wyoming.

Laythe also said that a transplanting program to increase the range of these birds appears successful. Trumpeters were transferred from the Red Rock Lakes Migratory Waterfowl refuge to the Malheur National Wildlife refuge in Oregon and the Ruby Lake National Wildlife refuge in Nevada and in the latter the swans now have extended their range a considerable distance beyond the refuge boundaries.

More

To extend the range of the trumpeters even further, the bureau last month transferred 20 cygnets to the LaCreek National Wildlife refuge in South Dakota.

In addition to the wild birds, 36 trumpeter swans are on public display in 18 zoos throughout the United States. Wild birds also are found in Alaska and Canada.

The trumpeter swan is not to be confused with the slightly smaller whistling swan which nests in the Arctic and is a common migrant and wintering species throughout many areas of the United States.

###